

CLAIMS

1. A method of preparing a skinned food product, comprising:
 - contacting a skinned food product with heat to at least partially loosen a skin thereof; and
 - contacting said skinned food product with smoke for a period of time sufficient to provide said skinned food product with a smoked flavor.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein after contacting the skinned food product with heat, the method further includes:
 - spraying the skinned food product with a fluid to remove loosened pieces of skin therefrom.
3. The method of claim 2, wherein the fluid is a liquid.
4. The method of claim 2, wherein the fluid is a gas.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the skinned food product is contacted with heat by passing the skinned food product in proximity to a flame.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the skinned food product is contacted with smoke by passing the skinned food product through a smoking chamber.
7. The method of claim 1, wherein the skinned food product is a tomato.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the skinned food product is selected from the group consisting of peppers, onions, garlic, corn, potatoes, and artichokes.

9. A skinned food product prepared by the method defined in claim 1.

10. A method of preparing a skinned food product, comprising:
passing a skinned food product in proximity to a flame to at least partially blacken a skin thereof; and
passing said skinned food product through a smoking chamber.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein after the skinned food product passes in proximity with the flame, the method further includes :

spraying the skinned food product with water to remove loosened pieces of blackened skin therefrom.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein the skinned food product is rotated as the skinned food product passes in proximity to the flame.

13. The method of claim 11, wherein the skinned food product is rotated as the skinned food product passes in proximity to the flame and as the skinned food product is sprayed with water.

14. The method of claim 10, wherein the skinned food product is held in the smoking chamber for a period of time sufficient to provide the skinned food product with a smoked flavor.

15. The method of claim 10, wherein the skinned food product is a tomato.

16. The method of claim 10, wherein the skinned food product is selected from the group consisting of peppers, onions, garlic, corn, potatoes, and artichokes.

17. A skinned food product prepared by the method defined in claim 10.

18. A system for preparing a skinned food product, comprising:

a roasting unit comprised of a housing having an inlet and an outlet, a gas burner disposed within said housing, and a water spray disposed within said housing between said gas burner and said outlet;

a smoking chamber comprised of a housing having an inlet and an outlet; and

a conveyor system for transporting a skinned food product from said inlet of said roasting unit to said outlet of said roasting unit and from said inlet of said smoking chamber to said outlet of said smoking chamber.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein the conveyor system includes a first conveyor subsystem for transporting the skinned food product from the inlet of the roasting unit to the outlet of the roasting unit and a second conveyor subsystem for transporting the skinned food product from the inlet of the smoking chamber to the outlet of the smoking chamber.

20. The system of claim 19, wherein the first conveyor subsystem includes a conveyor having a belt comprised of a plurality of rollers, each of said rollers having a sprocket coupled thereto, a drive chain coupled to at least some of said rollers, a first drive pulley for driving said drive chain to move said rollers transversely from the inlet of the roasting unit to the outlet of the roasting unit, a spinner chain configured to

engage with said sprockets coupled to said rollers as said rollers pass in proximity to the gas burner and as said rollers pass in proximity to the water spray, and a second drive pulley for driving said spinner chain to rotate said rollers when said sprockets coupled to said rollers are engaged with said spinner chain.

21. The system of claim 20, wherein the second conveyor subsystem includes a first conveyor configured to receive the skinned food product from the conveyor of the first conveyor subsystem and to carry the skinned food product into the smoking chamber through the inlet thereof, a second conveyor for carrying the skinned food product in a direction substantially opposite to a direction of said first conveyor, and a third conveyor for carrying the skinned food product out of the smoking chamber through the outlet thereof in a direction substantially opposite to said direction of said second conveyor.

22. The system of claim 18, wherein the gas burner is coupled with a source of gas and the water spray is coupled with a source of water.

23. The system of claim 18, wherein the smoking chamber is coupled in flow communication with a smoke generating unit.

24. The system of claim 18, wherein suction fans are provided at the inlet and the outlet of the smoking chamber.

25. The system of claim 18, wherein the water spray is a spray rod having at least one spray nozzle.

26. A system for preparing a skinned food product, comprising:
a roasting unit having a heated zone for at least partially loosening a skin of a skinned food product;
a smoking chamber for smoking said skinned food product; and
a conveyor system for transporting said skinned food product through said roasting unit and through said smoking chamber.

27. The system of claim 26, wherein the heated zone is heated by a gas burner.

28. The system of claim 27, wherein the roasting unit further includes a fluid spray for spraying a fluid on the skinned food product to remove loosened pieces of skin therefrom.

29. The system of claim 28, wherein the gas burner is coupled with a source of gas and the fluid spray is coupled with a source of fluid.

30. The system of claim 29, wherein the fluid is selected from the group consisting of a liquid and a gas.

31. The system of claim 30, wherein the liquid is water.

32. The system of claim 26, wherein the conveyor system rotates the skinned food product as the skinned food product passes through the heated zone.

33. The system of claim 28, wherein the conveyor system rotates the skinned food product as the skinned food product passes in proximity to the gas burner and as the skinned food product passes in proximity to the fluid spray. ~

34. The system of claim 28, wherein the fluid spray is a spray rod having at least one spray nozzle.

35. The system of claim 26, wherein the smoking chamber is coupled in flow communication with a smoke generating unit.